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RINGLEADER IN SACRAMENTO BASED I.D. THEFT CONSPIRACY PLEADS GUILTY TO MULTIPLE FEDERAL FELONIES

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that CURTIS LYNN MARTINEZ, 35, of Carmichael, California, pled guilty today to conspiracy, bank fraud, aggravated identification theft, and possession of stolen United States mail before United States District Judge Frank C. Damrell Jr.

This case is the product of a combined investigation by the United States Postal Inspection Service, the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, the Sacramento Police Department, and other law enforcement agencies in the greater Sacramento metropolitan area.

In this case, the "Sacramento Citizens' Crime Alert Rewards Program" provided assistance to law enforcement, leading to the capture of the conspirators and seizure of evidence. The Crime Alert Program is dedicated to helping the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department and the Sacramento City Police Department apprehend the most wanted suspects in the City of Sacramento and its surrounding areas. Under the Crime Alert Program, citizens can receive a cash reward of up to \$1000 for information leading to the arrest of a suspect or information that solves an unsolved crime.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Michelle Rodriguez, who prosecuted the case, MARTINEZ was arrested after taking law enforcement and United States Postal Inspectors on a high

speed chase through Sacramento city streets. MARTINEZ and several named and unnamed conspirators – executed a scheme to manufacture checks with account numbers of others. Specifically, MARTINEZ stole identification and account number information from rural United States mail boxes and elsewhere to create the fraudulent checks. MARTINEZ himself possessed and used numerous fraudulent identifications, each bearing MARTINEZ' photo and the name and identification information of another.

In February 2007, law enforcement received tips in response to a Crime Alert Bulletin for MARTINEZ' whereabouts. Thereafter, as a ruse, law enforcement arranged to have MARTINEZ go to a motel in Sacramento. On February 7, 2007, MARTINEZ drove to the motel with a co-conspirator but fled after seeing law enforcement. After MARTINEZ was arrested, law enforcement found in his car over 25 manufactured checks bearing the name of several different individuals, social security cards and numbers of others, ownership documents belonging to others, and numerous store receipts for fraudulent transactions. Over 50 different victims have been identified in this case.

MARTINEZ is scheduled to be sentenced on February 19, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. before Judge Damrell. MARTINEZ faces a maximum of five years in prison for the conspiracy, five years for the possession of stolen United States mail offense, 30 years for the bank fraud offense, and a minimum mandatory term of two years for the aggravated identity theft offense. MARTINEZ also faces a five year term of federal supervised release. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors. MARTINEZ remains in federal custody after entry of his guilty pleas.

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